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In a concluding chapter on manorial law Professor Seeliger rejects the prevailing theory of a general depression of freemen into predial serfdom in the post Carolingian period followed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by a general emancipation owing to the increased value of land. He contends that personal freedom was not lost in a wholesale fashion in the earlier period, and that the view which regards manorial law as the law of status, imposing that status upon those who, in any relation, were subject to it, is erroneous.

A wise and temperate passage from Professor Seeliger's concluding paragraph may here be quoted as characteristic of the spirit and aim of his investigation:

Unsere Betrachtung will durchaus nicht die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Grundherrschaft schlechthin leugnen, will nicht an Stelle der übertriebenen Wertschätzung eine gleich fehlerhafte Unterschätzung setzen. Ausdrücklich soll vielmehr anerkannt sein, dass die materiellen Verhältnisse stets die sozialen und politischen mächtig beeinflussten, dass wirtschaftliche Kraft soziales und politisches Übergewicht, wirtschaftliche Schwäche Minderung des sozialen und politischen Einflusses bewirkt habe. Aber für überaus bedenklich halten wir es, die sozialen und politischen Bildungen einfach aus wirtschaftlichen Wandlungen ableiten zu wollen.

The righteous will consider this and rejoice.

GAILLARD THOMAS LAPSLEY.

*John Lackland.* By KATE NORGATE. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1902. Pp. 302.)

THE first thought with which one opens Miss Norgate's history of the reign of John is almost inevitably of comparison with her *England under the Angevin Kings*, of which it is really a continuation. *John Lackland* stands in considerable contrast to the earlier work. The difference of style is noticeable at once. The later book is less picturesque, deals less in description, and has fewer touches of life and color, but it gains some compensation in seeming a more sober and businesslike study. It is implied that the author still regards John Richard Green as master and guide, but Green's influence is manifestly less, not on style alone, but on the general view and on the choice and interpretation of the facts. The impression of greater maturity and steadiness which the style makes is deepened by a critical examination of details. Scientifically it is a better piece of work than the *Angevin Kings*. Especially is there much less of what is too frequent in the first book—a mingling together in the same account of what Miss Norgate drew directly from the sources and of her own explanations and inferences in such a way that it is impossible to distinguish between them without reference to the texts, and one gets the impression that she found in Benedict or Wendover what she only believes they intended to imply.

The book is an account of the political history of John's reign in greater detail than we have had before. It does not add to our knowl-

edge anything of first importance. Much space is given, and well given, to the affairs of Ireland; and the four maps of the island at different dates from 1175 to 1210 are very useful. From the beginning of the trouble with the Pope, Miss Norgate makes greater use of the letters of Innocent than has been usual with English historians, and the same is true of the Patent, Close, and Charter Rolls in the period of the conflict with the barons. The result is the bringing out of points of detail not before stated, especially in the period after the battle of Bouvines, but these concern, I believe, no question of great importance. The author's attitude to the barons in their struggle with the King after the signing of the charter is distinctly unfavorable. She evidently does not believe in their sincerity or in their willingness to grant the King fair play. In regard to John himself, the author quotes Green's rather high estimate of his capacities as a kind of motto of the book, but her account of his life does not strengthen the argument in favor of that opinion. Her own estimate of him and of the other personages of the period is evidence of sober and careful judgment well grounded on the original authorities.

The great weakness of the book is on the constitutional side. Miss Norgate seems herself to have no feeling of the tremendous change, slowly prepared, which begins to find expression in the reign of John — the transformation of a feudal monarchy which in the end gives England so unique a constitution, or if she does, she does not convey the impression of it to her reader. Perhaps the criticism is unfair. We should remember that the book is primarily a political, not a constitutional history. It is only because these two sides were so closely interwoven in this reign, and the direct results of the political situation were of such immense importance in the constitutional, that we feel any sense of disappointment.

In regard to the trial of John by the French King's court before the loss of Normandy, Miss Norgate holds to the view expressed in her paper on the subject in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. XIV., that he was not tried at all, not for the murder of Arthur and not on the appeal of the barons of Poitou. This must, I think, be regarded as certainly a wrong interpretation of the facts. It is true that we have in only one contemporary chronicler a direct statement that such a trial took place, but this is surely one of those occasions when the situation of things itself gives full support to an assertion otherwise unsupported. Of errors of a more positive sort there are few of any importance. The most serious one noted — the misinterpretation of the passage from Walter of Coventry, II. 218, in regard to John's demand of an oath of fealty from his subjects "against all men," adding also the unaccustomed clause "against the charter," which she took to mean that the demand of fealty against all men was itself supposed to be contrary to the charter, — has no doubt been repeatedly called to Miss Norgate's attention. That it should have escaped her own revisions seems unaccountable.

In conclusion we have to thank Miss Norgate for a scholarly account of this important reign on its political side, giving us new glimpses into

its details and emphasizing the value of a thorough study of its documentary sources.

GEORGE B. ADAMS.

*The Destruction of the Greek Empire and the Story of the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.* By EDWIN PEARS. (London: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1903. Pp. xxiv, 476.)

THIS is a continuation of *The Fall of Constantinople: being the Story of the Fourth Crusade* by the same author. The narrative begins with a brief account of the Latin Empire, 1204-1261. The second chapter describes the difficulties in reconstructing the Greek Empire. Mr. Pears makes it clear that the Western rulers by their attempts to restore the Latin Empire hindered the development of a strong empire and facilitated the entrance of the Turks into Europe. In Chapters 4, 6, and 9 are traced the dynastic struggles and the political history from 1320 to 1452. Chapter 8 deals with the causes of the decay of the Empire, namely the weakness resulting from sixty years of rule by the Latins, the constant attacks of the Turks, and the depopulation caused by the Black Death. Chapters 3, 5, and 7 are devoted to the history of the Turks from their entrance into Asia Minor until 1451. Chapter 10 describes the preparation for the siege by both Christians and Turks, and Chapters 11 to 17 — the best portion of the work — depict with remarkable fidelity the siege and capture. Chapter 18 deals chiefly with the character of Mahomet II., and Chapter 19 with the influence of the disintegration and fall of the Empire on the Renaissance in western Europe. Chapter 20 attempts a summary of the results. There are three topographical appendixes, and one on the influence of religion on Greeks and Moslems respectively. The book is published in attractive form, and is supplied with four illustrations, three maps, and an adequate analytical index.

Since Gibbon wrote his brilliant description of the fall of Constantinople, a large amount of new material has been brought to light, and Pears is the first English writer to use this material. Gibbon deplored the inadequacy of the sources of his information, and especially the lack of Turkish accounts of the siege. Pears's summary of the sources now available that were unknown to Gibbon includes seven valuable accounts by eye-witnesses, namely Critobulus, a Greek officer in the service of Mahomet, the podestà of Pera, just across from Constantinople, the superior of the Franciscan friars at Galata, and four Italians.

In addition, there are eleven other less important sources, including three Turkish, two Slavonic, and one Armenian account. In contrast with this, Gibbon used the writings of only three eye-witnesses and four less important sources. It is evident from this enumeration that Pears is able to supply a wealth of detail impossible to Gibbon, and that his sources are sufficiently numerous to furnish an accurate account, which may be corrected in minor points but is not likely to be altered essentially by the discovery of additional sources.